

We've finished the March 28, 2017 Bulletin 120 (B120) forecast update. The forecasts include observed conditions through the morning of March 28, 2017.

The forecasts are posted at:

B120: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/iodir?s=b120up>

Forecast Summary:

Last week's forecast dropped in all basins. The latest forecast indicates increases in the forecast for all basins except those south of the Kings River. The projected median April-July (AJ) runoff in the major Sierra river basins range from 131 percent of average for the Inflow to Lake Shasta to 242 percent on the Kern River. The March 28 forecast shows increases of 6, 4, and 1 percent in the Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Tulare Lake regions compared to last week's forecast.

Runoff:

With only several days before the end of March, month-to-date flows are over 200 percent of average for all rivers south of the Merced. Flow rates in the Stanislaus and Merced rivers are between 190 and 195 percent of average. Runoff patterns are being affected by snowmelt in the lower elevations **and** late winter rains. The Yuba River is flowing at the lowest rate of about 125 percent of average while the Feather and American rivers are flowing at rates closer to 170 percent of average.

Precipitation:

Precipitation for the 2016-2017 water year has accumulated at the rates of average shown in the table below. Accumulated precipitation remains near or above the record 1982-83 levels for the 8-Station and 5-Station indices.

Region/Index	WY-to-date precipitation (%) through March 30, 2017	Month-to-date precipitation (% of month total) through March 30, 2017
Northern Sierra 8-Station Index	201 (83.3 inches)	98 (6.8 inches)
San Joaquin 5-Station Index	193 (64.6 inches)	65 (4.0 inches)
Tulare Basin 6-Station Index	178 (43.1 inches)	44 (2.1 inches)

Snowpack:

The snowpack as of the morning of March 30, 2017 stands at the following (based on snow sensors):

Region	Snow Water Equivalent (inches)	% of Average (Apr 1)
Northern	40.8	147
Central	50.5	175
Southern	43.9	164
Statewide	45.8	164

Weather and Climate Outlooks:

The latest forecast for the next six days indicates no precipitation anywhere in the Sierra except for negligible amounts Sunday over the northern range. The current freezing levels which are 5,000 to 6,000 feet over the northern Sierra and about 7,500 feet over the southern range are expected to increase to be over 11,000 feet by Saturday. During Sunday through Tuesday, the freezing level is forecast to drop to about 9,000 to 10,000 feet over the northern and southern range, respectively.

The NWS Climate Prediction Center (CPC) one-month outlook for April, issued March 16, indicates increased chances of below normal precipitation for the northwestern portion of the state and equal chances of above or below normal precipitation elsewhere. The same outlook predicts equal chances of above or below normal temperatures for all areas except for the Colorado River Region where above normal temperatures are expected.

The CPC three-month (April-May-June) outlook, issued March 16, indicates equal chances of above or below normal precipitation for all of the state. The same outlook predicts equal chances of above or below normal temperatures for the state except for the far southeastern area and the Colorado River basin where above normal temperatures are expected.

ENSO-neutral conditions are present. Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are near average across the central and east-central Pacific. They are above average in the eastern Pacific Ocean. ENSO-neutral conditions are favored to continue through at least the Northern Hemisphere spring 2017, with increasing chances for El Niño development into the fall.

Next Update:

A Bulletin 120 for conditions as of April 1 will be available Monday, April 10. If you have any questions regarding this forecast, please contact a member of the Snow Surveys staff.